41 Hockings E-5 (1962-1977) 1980
AW50 Badaga AW50

with non-Badaga prostitutes. The lower-class group, as we shall see below (3.7—*c*), has some extra-marital sexual contact with a wide range of other Badaga men, including of course some who have also had relations with diseased prostitutes. Since the four chosen villages are representative in their subcultures of these four phratries, are all accessible to therapists and midwives, are located within three miles of each other in the middle of the plateau, are all at the same elevation of about 6,500 feet, but in no instances were using contraceptives in 1963, it is difficult to avoid explaining the divergence between the average number of children in these families by any other means than this hypothesis: that *there is a positive correlation between socio-ritual status (or extent of religious orthodoxy) and the fertility of women.* I realize this may sound like moralizing; but it is the census data and not I myself that shows the "good," orthodox Badaga parents to have more live births than those who indulge more in inter-community, extra-marital relations.

The number of stillbirths and abortions is something I know nothing about. In one well-to-do Adikiri farming family which happened to include two skilled midwife-therapists, a woman married at the age of 12 conceived first at 18, and then had a total of five live births and another five miscarriages or neonate deaths. I have no reason to believe either that her husband (whom I know well) was diseased or that her birth history is really atypical.

Sex Education

3.2. A useful way of approaching the matter of Badaga sexual practice is to ask how the individual acquires his knowledge of the matter. The answer is that diverse sources are available, including conversation with others, observation of men and animals, and experimentation. We shall elaborate on each of these in turn.

Conversation on sexual matters occurs not only with members of one's own sex but also with lovers. Since in each case the party with whom one holds such conversation may be either an age-mate or some older person, there is a relatively free flow of information from one generation to another, and between the two sexes. Nonetheless some propriety is observed in seeking the information. Parents do not usually give any sex instruction to their children, nor do elder brothers generally give it to younger siblings or elder sisters to their younger sisters. The mother's brother, who is a kind of

41 Hockings E-5 (1962-1977) 1980
AW50 Badaga AW50

spiritual guide, does not give his nephews or nieces any of this information either. Girls may exceptionally be able to get advice from their mothers or grandmothers.

Girls do have sexual discussions however, mainly with other girls of the same age, and especially with adolescent girls who have recently married or who are about to be married. A group of adolescent friends is thus where a young bride will find out about the sexual experiences of others. In general young girls are not included in such discussions before they reach puberty, as it is felt they would not understand.

There is a situation in which the instruction of girls used to be more formalized, and at the same time allowed for an older, experienced woman to teach them. Until the early part of this century unmarried adolescent girls used to sleep together in one house of their village. Since the young boys did the same thing in another house, this allowed married adults more freedom to engage in sexual activity at home. Naturally the girls sometimes had sexual discussions and the woman, often a widow, in whose house they were staying would usually join in with some practical advice.

The custom of boys sleeping together in one house has virtually ceased, but it did offer them too an opportunity for sexual discussions. Boys show an interest in sex at an earlier age than girls do, and from the age of 12 they take part in discussions with youths much older than themselves, including some who are married. Thus some boys may joke with a newly-wed friend about what they have heard him doing at night, and he in turn may choose to give them a detailed description.

Boys who are not attending school have a great deal of time to spend on sexual discussions and experimentation. Usually too there are some idle old men in the village who kill time by talking about sex with the boys or discuss the subject amongst themselves. Young husbands and wives may also have such discussions, just as unmarried lovers do. Groups of women may be quite frank about their experiences in front of each other, too. Newly married brides can hope to learn something from their perhaps more experienced husbands, and adolescent boys sometimes manage to learn from the wife of an elder brother.

3.3. Conversation inevitably leads to observation, and in a peasant society opportunities abound for watching sexual activity. Most visible, of course, are the dogs and cattle in the village, whose be-

41 Hockings E-5 (1962-1977) 1980
AW50 Badaga AW50

haviour is seen by all. But even human coitus is not altogether hidden from view, largely because of the sleeping arrangements. The Badaga house has at most three rooms, but when it is occupied by a joint family children usually find themselves sleeping with married relatives in one or the other of these rooms. It is thus a commonplace to see dimly one's parents or married siblings engaging in sexual activity. Couples of any age are normally very embarrassed if they think they are being watched, and normally stop what they are doing if they suspect anyone else is aware of it. If sharing the bed with children a couple will have intercourse while lying on their sides so as to be less visible and turbulent. Yet in practice anyone who wants to watch his relatives in coitus has simply to pretend to be asleep.

Sexual relations are not confined to the home. Indeed, lovers and adulterers have to manage as comfortably as they can in the bush; and here too they may be followed and spied upon by children. Parties of boys sometimes prowl around a village late at night, especially while a festival is distracting most of the adults, to find out who is staying at home for sexual purposes. Girls are normally uninterested in watching people have coitus although they have probably all witnessed the act at one time or another, I was told.

3.4. Sexual experimentation in Badaga society runs the gamut from heterosexual relations with a lover or spouse to homosexuality, masturbation and bestiality. We will consider the non-reproductive forms of behaviour first.

Masturbation is common in both sexes. Small girls may sometimes be seen doing it in public. It is said that adolescent girls masturbate by inserting an egg-plant fruit in the vagina, but while hospitals get cases proving that this does occur it cannot be a common practice, for any girl wanting some sexual experience can easily find a willing young man, especially in those villages which still lack street lighting. Adolescent boys and some adult men masturbate, and small boys may occasionally be seen doing it too.

Homosexual relations occur between young men and boys. Even older men sleeping with boys sometimes satisfy themselves between the boys' thighs. The men presume that lesbian relations also occur, but their only evidence for this is that a few adolescent girls show an abnormally rapid growth of the breasts, thought to be the result of a lesbian's manipulations. (The word *peggusi* can mean either a male or a female homosexual.)

4: Hockings E-5 (1962-1977) 1980
AW50 Badaga AW50

Bestiality is an even rarer phenomenon than homosexuality. The only instances that were reported to me were, first, the curing of a venereal disease by intercourse with a donkey (6.61); and secondly, an adult herdsman who was seen standing on a rock and having relations with a female buffalo. The Basel Mission presbytery minutes for 1903 (written by Badagas) cite similar problems with a Badaga Christian teacher: "...last year he committed sin with a Toda girl...when he was on the way to Ooty to see his wife, who had gone there for her confinement. He also confessed that he had committed the same sin with his own country mare. This was all he confessed." (Basel Mission 1905: 305.)

3.5. These however are for Badagas aberrant forms of sexual expression; most experimentation takes the form of heterosexual intercourse. Its techniques will be described later (3.16), but here we will discuss only those situations in which young Badagas learn about sexuality. For purposes of clarity we can talk about affairs with lovers of the same community, extra-community liaisons, and situations in which parents used to arrange formal training for their adolescent children.

This last custom no longer prevails. It used to occur until some 30 years ago, the initiative to train a girl being taken by her own parents or another close relative; while a boy would usually seek his indoctrination in the arms of an elder brother's wife. In a typical case a man might tell his wife that their unmarried daughter was now old enough for sexual initiation. The wife would then speak to a married daughter about the matter, and she in turn would ask her own husband to offer the necessary practical training when an opportunity arose. In any event, it was supposed to be a relative, such as sister's husband — even if only in a classificatory sense — who should initiate a young girl. If a girl did not undergo such an initiation there was another opportunity for her immediately following her wedding. In this instance the person who would deflorate the bride was not the groom, but a more experienced man who could be gentle with her for the first night or two, and would be related to her as a classificatory husband's brother. The new husband would be absent on these occasions. This custom is no longer followed.

The obverse situation would involve a youth when aged about seventeen being given sexual training by a brother's wife who might be ten years or more his senior, and in some instances used to be

41 Hockings E-5 (1962-1977) 1980
AW50 Badaga AW50

picked for the task by the boy's own parents. This initiation of youths still seems to occur: some do it because an older man has advised them to, others because they love the woman, and others again because her own husband seems unable to satisfy her. The elder brother's wife is in fact the most accessible person for a youth's training or gratification: the two of them are often working together in the fields, and even if they do not live under the same roof a young man always has ready access to his brother's house. In earlier days relations with such a woman were particularly common when she was on the way from her husband's village to visit her father, when she was working outside the village, or when her husband went out to the fields to guard the crops against wild animals during the night. The husband might himself recommend that his younger brother stay with his wife, to assuage her fears of the Kurumba sorcerers. If the young man were seen leaving her house in the morning, no one would criticize him or think less of the woman.

Such formal sexual initiation has virtually ended, but adolescents still indulge in sexual play, some girls even being so aggressive as to way-lay boys in the woods for this purpose. There is no indication that such play occurs before the coming of puberty, and nowadays the fact that most children are attending school makes it less frequent. Since this kind of play most often occurs within the village community it takes place between consanguineal relatives, albeit distant ones. The play is of course conducted in secret, and without knowledge of the parents. The most adventurous kind of love assignment is one in which a youth hides inside the house of his beloved, by squatting inside the huge grain storage basket (*balla*) that some homes still have. Once everyone has gone to sleep he gets out for the rendezvous. Girls who are guarding a field from the birds are an ideal target for amorous adventures; and there it is usually a pair of girls who are approached by a pair of boys. Girls gathering wood in the forest may also be propositioned, but if they spend too much time away from the rest of the women their absence will be noticed. If it should happen that an adolescent girl becomes pregnant by a boy who is her agnate she cannot marry him, and her parents therefore try to arrange a marriage as quickly as possible with a male who is in the "correct" relationship to their daughter, preferably a cross-cousin. Generally a man does not want to marry a pregnant girl unless she is carrying his child.

41 Hockings E-5 (1962-1977) 1980
AW50 Badaga AW50

585 826 It is believed that if a newly married girl has an itching sensation in the vagina while visiting her father's house, her husband will come to her the next night. Similarly, if a young husband is away from his wife, for example while grazing buffaloes, and he has an involuntary erection, this means that he will enjoy his wife within a day or two.

585 841 Sometimes a wedding is postponed a few days if the bride has a menstrual period immediately before the planned date. This is not because of the probable inconvenience at consummation, but simply because she cannot be allowed into the house until seven days after her period owing to a pollution taboo. And as we have suggested, a bride generally does not sleep with her husband immediately. She is made to sleep with other children in the family or other members of the household until her next period. Only then will the consummation occur, because the parents may want to make sure the girl was not pregnant prior to the wedding. Otherwise if they are quite certain she had a period a week or two before the wedding, and she is considered old enough, the parents may permit the consummation quickly. Even so, it is usually impossible for the bride to be deflowered until the third night because she is busy with a ceremonial visit to her own father's house and village, or with those relatives who are still visiting her. On the fourth evening however it may be possible to put the couple in a separate room or another house—a widow's house is easily vacated for this purpose. The groom goes to this "bed-house" after supper and waits there while some women persuade the bride to go and join him. Usually she is shy, and even if she is eager to go she pretends to be shy. When the shyness is genuine it is because the marriage has been arranged, and the bride does not know how her husband will behave. Some girls, and even the occasional youth, are so ignorant about things that they do not know why they are being sent off to a separate room together. Such an awkward situation can soon lead to divorce, or to further sexual training: an informant explained how he was asked (by his wife) to have a gentle intercourse with his wife's newly married sister, since she had been terrified on the night of the consummation. In general, if a newlywed husband or wife expresses fear of this event, an old woman crushes the leaf of the cockspur flower and makes the person swallow it in milk or water beforehand: this cures the fear.

585 (586) (864) (835) (955)

881 826 Badagas believe the hymen exists only until puberty, when it is automatically ruptured by the first menses. (A few girls do not mens-